HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

By: Delegates Queen, Gibson, and Gutierrez
Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2018
Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

A House Joint Resolution concerning

Presidential Authority Over the Use of Nuclear Weapons

FOR the purpose of requesting Maryland’s Congressional Delegation to establish a system of checks and balances to ensure that the President of the United States does not have unchecked authority to launch a first strike of nuclear weapons.

WHEREAS, There are over 15,000 nuclear weapons globally, most possessed by the United States and Russia, which are significantly more destructive than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; and

WHEREAS, The use and detonation of even a small number of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic human, environmental, and economic consequences globally, impacting everyone on the planet; and

WHEREAS, The first use of nuclear weapons against any other nuclear–armed nation would result in their immediate retaliation and invite the near total destruction of municipalities near the Washington Metropolitan Area; and

WHEREAS, A single nuclear detonation of a 10 kiloton improvised highly enriched uranium device in Baltimore City would cause upwards of 67,320 fatalities and 102,080 injuries; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of our State have the right to live a life free from the threat of the reckless use of nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear weapons fail to address 21st century national security concerns such as climate change, cyberattacks, and terrorism while draining precious resources from programs that make us safer and more secure; and

WHEREAS, Over 300 former heads of state, experts, and religious and military leaders have called for urgent action to eliminate all nuclear weapons globally; and
WHEREAS, Every American president since Ronald Reagan has worked to reduce global nuclear stockpiles in an effort to ultimately eliminate these weapons of mass destruction; and

WHEREAS, President Donald J. Trump has repeatedly questioned why we cannot use nuclear weapons and called for a major nuclear buildup, which will incite other countries to do the same and dramatically increase the risks of nuclear war; and

WHEREAS, The United States is on track to spend $1 trillion over the next 30 years to upgrade its nuclear arsenal, money that could be better spent on education, healthcare, clean-energy jobs, public safety innovation, and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States currently has the sole and unilateral power to launch a nuclear war without any consultation or any system of checks and balances; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That Maryland's Congressional Delegation should take all necessary steps to establish a system of checks and balances with regard to the first use of nuclear weapons and to ensure that the President of the United States shall no longer have the sole and unchecked authority to launch nuclear weapons, except in circumstances of retaliation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and Representatives Andrew P. Harris, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger, III, John P. Sarbanes, Anthony G. Brown, Steny Hamilton Hoyer, John Delaney, Elijah E. Cummings, and Jamie Raskin, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.